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## THE SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSONS.

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SEPT. 5. JESUS THE TRUE VINE. John xv. 1-16.

SEPT. 12. THE MISSION OF THE SPIRIT. John xvi. 5-20.

SEPT. 19. JESUS INTERCEDING. John xvii.

In the first lesson, the imagery of verses 6 and 7 is very much like that of Ezek. xv. 4, 5.

The Old Testament citation in John xv. 25, though not in the Lesson, is worth studying, for several reasons. Undoubtedly it is from Ps. lxix. 4 or Ps. xxxv. 19, in each of which places the Hebrew is a part of the subject, the word for hating being a participle used substantively (*shin'ay chinnam*), and is literally translated in the Septuagint *οἱ μισοῦντές με δωρεάν*. Phrases of similar import are used in several other places in the Psalms. Jesus, in citing, makes a complete statement of the words which were, in the original, only the subject of a statement (*Ἐμίσησάν με δωρεάν*). The instance would be important in an induction for defining what the New Testament writers mean when they speak of an Old Testament statement as "fulfilled." Jesus here intended to be understood that the world's hatred of him is just such a causeless and unjustifiable hatred as is often described in the Psalms; it is not so evident that he also intended to say that the acts of his personal enemies were specifically foreseen and foretold by the author of one or more of these Psalms.

In the third Lesson, in John xvii. 12, we again find the formula, "That the Scripture might be fulfilled." In this case, the formula is not attended by an actual citation; we are left to inference to determine whether our Savior refers to some particular passage, or to the general tenor of the Scriptures. Both views are actually held. The particular passages commonly claimed to be here intended are Ps. xli. 10 (9), which is cited with reference to Judas in John xiii. 18; Ps. cix. 8, cited in Acts i. 20; and Isa. lvii. 12, 13. Those who claim that the reference is to a class of passages would instance either those passages that are connected in the New Testament with the fate of Judas, or the wider class that refer to the betrayal and death of the Messiah. Yet another theory of the matter might be that when Jesus said, "None of them is destroyed except the son of destruction, that the Scripture might be fulfilled," he was referring to the doctrine of retribution currently taught in the Old Testament, and not to any specific predictions concerning himself or his immediate associates. As a specimen of this doctrine, see Ps. cix. 16-19, in the Hebrew or the Revised Version. In this and a multitude of other Old Testament passages, the doctrine is emphasized that he who persists in playing the part of a "Son of Destruction" will justly be destroyed by Jehovah. Among these various views, one who insists that the fulfilling of Scripture here spoken of must be the coming to pass of a prediction should hold that the Scripture here said to be fulfilled is the whole line of prediction concerning the death of the Messiah; on any other theory, the fulfillment is simply the

fact that certain statements, made in the Old Testament, closely fit the case in hand, and may, therefore, be fairly applied to it.

The phrase "Son of Destruction," in xvii. 12, is a notable Hebraism. The fact that the citation in xv. 25 is from the "law" renders that verse one of the half dozen important instances for proving that, in the time of the writing of the New Testament, the term "the law" was currently applied to the whole Old Testament, as well as to the Pentateuch.

In the Lesson for Sept. 12, and throughout the chapters covered by the Lessons for the month, the doctrine of the Holy Spirit, the Paraclete, is very prominent. This fact calls for the suggestion that the best way of studying the New Testament doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost would be to begin by studying the Old Testament doctrine. The study would be a surprise to many who are accustomed to think of the Old Testament as very barren in respect to this doctrine; it is, on the contrary, peculiarly rich here. Extending over the larger part of the ground which a Christian student would wish to cover, the two Testaments teach parallel doctrines concerning the Divine Spirit; and so far as they are parallel, the Old is very much more full and explicit than the New. Where they cease to be parallel, the New could best be studied by differentiating it from the Old. In making this study, one should, of course, avoid the carrying of New Testament ideas back into the Old Testament; and he should equally avoid the assuming that the New Testament ideas are not to be found in the Old, and the consequent straining of the language of the Old Testament, to prevent its teaching what the New Testament also teaches.

In John xvi. 20, and elsewhere in the chapters for the month, occurs the expression "verily, verily." No Bible student ought to need to be informed that the Greek word here is *ἀμὴν*, the same word with the "amen" at the end of the Lord's Prayer, and elsewhere. The word, of course, is Hebrew. We are accustomed to be told that it means, at the end of a petition, "so let it be." But a little study of Hebrew usage will give to the word a much richer meaning than this. Aaron and Hur stayed up the hands of Moses, and his hands were steady (*'emunah*) till the going down of the sun (Exod. xvii. 12). This is a good instance by which to keep in mind the meaning of the Hebrew stem. It is applied to anything that is so well supported that it can be relied upon. From this radical idea come the Hebrew words for truth, and for believe. Verbally, in the Hebrew, truth is *that which can be relied upon*, and faith is our relying upon that which is reliable. Practically, the result is the same as that finally reached by all evangelical theology; but the path to this result through the Hebrew is direct, while that through latinized scholasticism is as circuitous as a horseshoe.

#### SEPT. 26. REVIEW.

#### OCT. 3. JESUS BETRAYED. John xviii. 1-14.

The fact that a Judas and a betrayal were necessary, that Jesus might be delivered into the hands of his enemies, is by itself conclusive proof that his death was not the work of the whole Jewish people, nor of the Palestinian Jews, as a body, nor of the constituted representatives of the nation acting in their proper capacity. On this account, Judas is a very interesting character to the lovers of the truth in Israelitish history. According to the narratives in the Gospels, a large majority of the men who held official position were among the enemies of

Jesus, and were determined upon his death. It is therefore the more significant that they dared not proceed against Jesus by public arrest and legal trial, but had to bargain with Jesus to get him privately into their hands. The actual proceedings against Judas will be considered in the lessons for the next month; for the present, we have to look at the fact that Jewish public opinion in regard to Jesus was, from the beginning to the end of his career, overwhelmingly and unswervingly in his favor. It is true that in John's Gospel the term "the Jews" is often used, without qualification, to denote those Jews who were hostile to Jesus. But this usage is peculiar to John, and is one of the marks of the relatively late origin of that Gospel. It is not found in the other Gospels, except, possibly, in Matt. xxviii. 15. It is occasionally found in the Acts and Epistles, but is frequent only in John. Among the New Testament writers, only John wrote after Christianity had become so completely differentiated from the rabbinical Judaism that Jew and Christian were habitually thought of as hostile to one another. The other gospels, with the Acts and the Epistles, habitually speak of the Jews as a people, some of whom openly accept Jesus, some of whom openly reject him, and some of whom do neither, but merely treat his claims with outward respect. When they wrote, this was still the prevalent condition of things; when John wrote, it had become a condition of things belonging to the past; it had already come to be generally considered that the Jews had one religion, and the Christians another; Christianity and Judaism were no longer regarded as two opposing movements in the Jewish religion.

But although John employs the term "the Jews" in this way, he certainly did not intend to be understood as saying that the Jewish people or nation hated Jesus and sought his life. In regard to this his statements agree with those of the rest of the New Testament. The Jews who sought the death of Jesus were a combination of public men, opposed one to another in many points, but agreeing in the fact that they all had reasons for wishing Jesus out of the way. Some of the traditional notions of us Christian people in this matter are very unjust to the Jews. In times when Christian nobles regarded the Jew as without the pale of common justice, and deemed it rare sport to persuade him, by means of the gridiron and the thumbscrew, to divide his wealth with them, it was natural to justify this by the theory that each particular Jew, in all time, is, in virtue of his being a Jew, one of the murderers of Jesus. Now that we have abandoned the Jew-compelling gridiron as infamous, it is time that we abandon this equally infamous misinterpretation of the New Testament.

The accounts of the history of Judea in the times of Christ, whether found in Josephus and the other original sources, or in the many secondary works that have been written, are confused and confusing. One should here be cautious how he illustrates Scripture by what purport to be historical facts, unless he has first tested the facts. Accounts of the scribes and pharisees and of the literature concerning them may be found in the larger Bible dictionaries and similar works, under the headings "Scribes," "Pharisees," "Mishna," "Talmud," and the like. Many of these accounts are quite full; they are usually rather unsatisfactory, perhaps necessarily so, on account of the nature of the subject. Edersheim's *Life of Christ*, published a year ago, and Shürer's *History of the Jewish People in the time of Jesus Christ*, just published, give to the general student advantages in this department of study, such as have never before been enjoyed.